

# CCD BULLETIN

## FOCUS: VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

The term “density” can be very controversial – people may associate it with failed public housing, unhealthy living conditions and traffic congestion. But if density is designed with community in mind, it can be a cornerstone for quality development that is both economically beneficial and environmentally benign.

A Visual Preference Survey\* can be helpful in educating communities about the potentially positive aspects of density. The survey is based on pictures of various types and intensities of development. The pictures can be photographs of actual places, or computer-generated or artist-rendered images displaying various options for development or redevelopment. Whatever the chosen format, it is especially helpful to include examples of development as it has occurred in the community under existing codes and ordinances, as well as images that show how development might occur with changes to those regulations (historical areas can provide good examples of the latter).



[Source: A. Nelessen Associates, [www.nelessen.org](http://www.nelessen.org)]

In a formal survey, each participant ranks pictures on a negative/positive scale (in the example above, on a scale of -10/+10), and results are tabulated to show which are preferred overall. Frequently the images with the highest scores are those depicting higher density areas, where good planning and careful design have created walkable, inviting streetscapes. This visual method is a great strategy for overcoming cognitive biases against density, by demonstrating the appeal of traditional development patterns. And the survey can be done relatively easily, providing inspiration for community visioning exercises and design charrettes. For more information, try these links:

[www.planning.dot.gov/Pitool/4c-g.asp](http://www.planning.dot.gov/Pitool/4c-g.asp) (Federal Transit Authority site on public participation)

[www.nelessen.org/frames.htm](http://www.nelessen.org/frames.htm) (Nelessen and Associates Web Site)

[www.ci.mankato.mn.us/urbandesign/chapter2/2.php3](http://www.ci.mankato.mn.us/urbandesign/chapter2/2.php3) (Mankato, MN survey results)

<http://user970783.wx15.registeredsite.com/content/vps/vpsinfo/> (College Park, GA survey)

[\*The term “Visual Preference Survey” is a trademark of A. Nelessen and Associates.]



## RECOMMENDED READING

***Creating Great Neighborhoods: Density in Your Community*** was produced by the Local Government Commission in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency, with sponsorship by the National Association of Realtors. This publication provides readers with an understanding of the connections between smart growth and density, highlights the successes of nine community-led efforts to create vibrant neighborhoods, and introduces five time-tested design principles to ensure that density becomes a community asset rather than a liability. Information and images from this publication can be adapted for local presentations. Go to [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/density.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/density.pdf).



## SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 4

If you're coming up for **Sea Grant Week** this year in Rockland, Maine, be sure to attend ***Reinventing Coastal Communities: Sea Grant's Role and Reward***, presented by the Coastal Communities and Economies Theme Team. This day-long workshop will focus on how coastal community development is linked to other Sea Grant programs, from aquaculture to fisheries and beyond. The session takes place on **Saturday, June 4**, from 8:30 to 5.

Pre-registration for the *Coastal Communities* workshop is not required, and attendance is open to all Sea Grant staff and directors. Look for details in the next *Bulletin*.

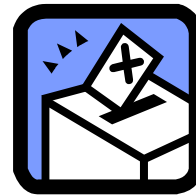


## COMMUNITY TOOL SHED

### ***Smart Growth Policies Database***

<http://cfpub.epa.gov/sgpdb/sgdb.cfm>

Actions undertaken by states, regions and localities to achieve smart growth are not always easy to learn about, nor are examples immediately available. This database highlights numerous policies and programs that states and localities nationwide have implemented to further smart growth. The policies catalogued here include a variety of approaches ranging from formal legislative and regulatory efforts to informal approaches, plans, and programs.



## CAST YOUR BALLOT...

Does the term "Smart Growth" play well in your region? If not, is there an alternative term that you've had success using? Please reply to [Amy.Zimmerling@noaa.gov](mailto:Amy.Zimmerling@noaa.gov) by Monday, March 28. Results of the poll will be posted in the next *CCD Bulletin*.

*The CCD Bulletin is edited and distributed by the National Sea Grant Office. But for the most meaningful content, we're relying on you. We're especially interested in sharing your stories of successful (or less than successful) coastal community development projects. Please send your suggestions, submissions and insights to: [Amy.Zimmerling@noaa.gov](mailto:Amy.Zimmerling@noaa.gov).*